

Message Text

SECRET

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21

ACTION SS-25

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P R 040920Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2831

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 0003

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, BG, LY, LASS

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH: AIR VICE MARSHAL TAWAB

1. BANGLADESH (BD) CHARGE ZAMIR (WHOM I KNEW SLIGHTLY IN DACCA IN 72-73) ASKED ME TO COME BY HIS RESIDENCE JAN 2 TO DISCUSS IMPORTANT MATTER. ON ARRIVAL WAS INTRODUCED TO BD CHIEF OF AIR STAFF, AIR VICE MARSHAL TAWAB WHO EXPLAINED HE HAD ARRIVED PREVIOUS DAY FROM DACCA ENROUTE TO GERMANY TO VISIT FAMILY. HE WAS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIS TRAVELS TO DROP INTO LIBYA TO SEE HIS OLD FRIEND CHARGE ZAMIR AND CHECK ON "THE BOYS", THE BOYS BEING THE GROUP OF BENGALI MAJORS CURRENTLY ENJOYING LIBYAN HOSPITALITY REPORTEDLY IN BENGHAZI.

2. AFTER BRIEF AMENITIES TAWAB CAME QUICKLY TO THE POINT. BD WAS AT A CRITICAL POINT. HAVING RID ITSELF OF THE DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP OF MUJIB AND HIS ASSOCIATES BD WAS URGENTLY SEEKING TO PUT ITS LONG NEGLECTED AFFAIRS IN ORDER. THE CURRENT REGIME THOUGH NOT ELECTED WAS WIDELY SUPPORTED BY BENGALIS WHO WERE TIRED OF POLITICS AND DISORDER. UNFORTUNATELY COUNTRY CONTINUED TO BE HARRASSED BY INDIANS AND SOVIETS WHO WERE BENT ON KEEPING IT IN BONDAGE. WHAT, HE ASKED, WAS THE ATTITUDE OF THE U.S. TOWARD BD AT THE PRESENT JUNCTURE. WOULD NOT

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THE US WISH TO SUPPORT A GOVT FIGHTING TO MAINTAIN ITS

INDEPENDENCE AGAINST THE USSR AND INDIA. A GOVT DECICATED
TO PRAGMATIC DEVELOPMENT WITH NO IDEOLOGICAL HANG UPS?

3. TAWAB ACKNOWLEDGED WITH GRATITUDE US ECONOMIC
AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE BUT INSISTED THAT ECONOMIC
AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT WERE NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT
STABILITY. TO THIS END HE SAID IT WOULD BE ONLY LOGICAL
FOR THE US TO PROVIDE MODEST MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO INSURE
SUCH STABILITY INTERNALLY AND PROVIDE SOME DETERRENCE
AGAINST OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. HE CLAIMED THAT THE PRESENT
AUTHORITIES IN BD DESIRED TO ELIMINATE OR AT LEAST CURTAIL
SOVIET AND INDIAN PRESENCE BUT WERE RELUCTANT TO MOVE IN
THAT DIRECTION WITHOUT HOPES OF US SUPPORT. HE EMPHASIZED
THAT BD DID NOT WISH TO ANTOGONIZE EIHER COUNTRY BUT MERELY
WISHED TO BE LEFT ALONE. HE REQUESTED THAT HIS CONVERSATON
BE TREATED WITH GREAT DISCRETION NOTING THAT ONLY BD ARMY AND
NAVY CHEIFS AND PRESIDENT WERE PRIVY TO HIS APPROACH.
(BD CHARGE ZAMIR WAS PRESENT THROUGHOUT).

4. IN RESPONDING I ASKED WHY ME, POINTING OUT I HAD
BEEN OUT OF BD FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS AND WAS WONDERING
WHY SUCH MATTERS WERE NOT TAKEN UP WITH EMBASSY DACCA OR
THRU THE BD AMABSSADOR IN WASHINGTON. TAWAB SAID
MATTER WAS ONE OF GREAT DELICACY AND DISCUSSIONS WITH
SENIOR US OFFICIALS IN DACCA BOUND TO COME TO SOVIET
AND/OR INDIAN ATTENTION; MOREOVER BD AMBASSADOR IN
WASHINGTON NOT YET FULLY TRUSTED. IN TRIPOLI HE SAID NO
ONE WOULD NOTICE (I'M NOT SO SURE).

5. I AGREED TO PASS ON HIS MESSAGE BUT EXPRESSED PERSONAL
DOUBT THAT US WOULD BE INTERESTED IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM FOR BD. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD BE CONTINUING TO
GERMANY IN A FEW DAYS BUT THAT CHARGE HERE WOULD KNOW
WERE TO REACH HIM AND THAT HE COULD COME TO WASHINGTON
AT SOME POINT FOR FURTHER TALKS IF NECESSARY.

6. EMBASSY DACCA AND DEPARTMENT MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE SOME
SENSE OUT OF ALL OF THIS. ONLY COMMENT I HAVE ON SUBJECT
WHICH IS QUITE OUTSIDE MY BAILIWICK IS THAT THOUGH TAWAB
APPEARS STRAIGHTFORWARD AND REASONABLE, TRIPOLI IS A PLACE
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WHERE ONE CAN MEET NOT ONLY BENGALIS AND AMERICANS BUT
PAKISTANIS AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY. LIBYANS.
CARLE

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